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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004728

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, LONDON FOR TSOU, US/UN FOR LAPENN,
BAGHDAD FOR PILZ, BASRAH FOR ERICKSON

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TAGS: [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [KU](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: BORDER ISSUE STILL FRONT PAGE NEWS AS KUWAIT WAITS
FOR UN TO VISIT

REF: A. KUWAIT 4380
 ¶B. KUWAIT 3396
 ¶C. BASRAH 129

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reason 1.4 (b)

¶1. (U) Recent press articles on the border issue highlighting Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) statements continue to make front page news in the Kuwaiti Arabic language press. Local Arabic dailies Al-Qabas and Al-Watan carried front page articles on November 8 discussing the ITG's decision to postpone a delegation visit to Kuwait to discuss the border demarcation, with both papers focusing on apparent contradictory statements within the ITG. Al-Watan reported that a source within the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior said that the discussions may provoke "rioting and demonstrations in the city of Basrah" since its inhabitants reject the demarcation process. Also mentioned in the articles is the possibility of a visit from the United Nations to review the situation and ITG spokesman Laith Kubbah's statement that "there is a dispute over confirmation of some of the border points." November 9 editorials in both Arabic and English press continued the discussions with calls for caution in dealing with the ITG on this issue.

¶2. (C) Although GOK ministers have repeatedly and firmly stated that the border issue is resolved, members of Parliament have recently made statements ranging from cordial to vitriolic about the state of affairs along the border. Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, a Salafi Islamist and three-time member of Parliament, called for the GOK to stop "giving" to the ITG without receiving anything in return while MP Mohammed Al-Khalifa, a conservative pro-Government member, asked the GOK to "stop the procedures for opening the Iraqi Embassy" in Kuwait and to cease aid to Iraq, in response to reports that the ITG is delaying the border delegation's visit. Other MPs asked for ITG clarification on Kubbah's statements as well as the Ministry of Interior's position on the subject.

¶3. (C) On a related matter, in mid-October Post provided a copy of the satellite imagery requested by the UN to both UN Cartographer Vladimir Bessarabov and Foreign Minister Shaykh Dr. Mohammed Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Post understands that a UN delegation visit to the border may be delayed until after the December 15 elections in Iraq.

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